

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 ISO-00 CAB-02 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00

DOT-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 FAA-00 SS-15 NSC-05 L-03 PA-01

PRS-01 USIA-06 /054 W

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FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 066

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAIR, NI

SUBJECT: CIVAIR- WORLD AIRWAYS ASSISTANCE TO
NIGERIAN CARGO AIRLINE

REFS: (A) STATE 153298
(B) LAGOS 425

1. JOSEPH TARKA OF JAYES HOLDING INTERNATIONAL IS FORMER
POLITICIAN AND CABINET MINISTER WHO HAS ONLY IN PAST YEAR
TURNED TO BUSINESS AS FULL-TIME ACTIVITY. WAS COMMISSIONER
(MINISTER) OF TRANSPORT 1967-71; COMMISSIONER OF COMMUNICATIONS
1971-74. TARKA RESIGNED HIS OFFICE IN AUGUST 1974 FOLLOWING
MUCH-PUBLICIZED ALLEGATIONS OF CORRUPTION BY PRIVATE NIGERIAN
BUSINESSMAN. IN PRINCIPLE, FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IS COMMITTED TO
AN INVESTIGATION OF CHARGES AGAINST TARKA AND PROSECUTION IF
FACTS SO WARRANT. HOWEVER, BETTING IS THAT GOVERNMENT WILL
ALLOW CASE TO FADE AWAY QUIETLY.

2. TARKA SAID TO BE STILL INTERESTED IN POLITICS AND REPORTEDLY
COMMANDS SOME SUPPORT IN NORTHERN STATES; BUT ANY POLITICAL
ASPIRATIONS HAVE RECEIVED SETBACK BY HEAD OF STATE' ANNOUNCEMENT LAS
T
ANNOUNCEMENT LAST OCTOBER THAT MILITARY RULE WILL BE EXTENDED FOR
INDEFINITE FUTURE. TARKA PROBABLY HAS USEFUL PERSONAL

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CONTACTS IN FMG, BUT HAS ENEMIES AS WELL; IN ANY CASE,

IT IS UNLIKELY THAT MEMBERS OF PRESENT GOVERNMENT WOULD WISH TO BE SEEN DEALING TOO CLOSELY WITH HIM.

3. JAYES HOLDING COMPANY ONLY RECENTLY ESTABLISHED AND IT IS STILL TOO EARLY TO RENDER JUDGMENTS ABOUT FINANCIAL STRENGTH OF FIRM. FYI- WE HAVE HEARD HOWEVER THAT TARKA IS TRYING TO COLLECT ON SOME OLD DEBTS SUPPOSEDLY INCURRED DURING HIS TENURE AS COMMISSIONER OF COMMUNICATIONS; THIS COULD INDICATE A NEED TO EXPAND COMPANY'S CAPITAL BASE. END FYI. WTDR ON JAYES DATED 14 JAN 1975 IS ON FILE AT USDOC (REF B). WORLD AIRWAYS CAN REQUEST AN UPDATE IF IT THINKS USEFUL.

4. ACCORDING TO NIGERIAN DIRECTOR OF CIVIL AVIATION, WEST AFRICAN CARGO COMPANY DOES NOT REPEAT NOT HOLD PERMIT TO OPERATE IN NIGERIA, NOR HAS IT APPLIED FOR ONE. KEY CRITERION IN GRANTING SUCH A PERMIT IN FIRST PLACE WOULD BE DEMONSTRATED CAPABILITY TO DO THE JOB. THIS IS PRESUMABLY WHY TARKA IS SEEKING JOINT VENTURE WITH WORLD AIRWAYS; HE PROBABLY NEEDS AN ASSOCIATION WITH COMPANY OF THAT CALIBER BEFORE HE CAN OBTAIN CARGO AIRLINE OPERATING PERMIT IN NIGERIA.

5. AS TO EXTENT OF FREIGHT AVAILABLE FOR EXPORT FROM NIGERIA TO EUROPE AND/OR U.S., THIS COULD BE A REAL PROBLEM. VAST MAJORITY OF BUSINESS IS IN OTHER DIRECTION, CHIEF EXPORTS ANY PETROLEUM, COCOA, TIN, RUBBER, PALM NUTS AND OIL, RAW COTTON, TIMBER. CHIEF EXPORTS TO U.S. ARE CRUDE OIL, COCOA CRUDE RUBBER, HIDES, SKINS, LUMBER AND WOOD PRODUCTS, SPICES. NOT MANY OF THESE ARE AMENABLE TO AIR TRANSPORT. EASUM

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